



## Visitor Experience and Resource Protection Program INDICATORS MONITORED IN 2006

The monitoring component of the park's Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) program safeguards the quality of both park resources and the visitor experience. Simply put, the monitoring component serves as a report card to measure how well the park is protecting and enhancing the Merced River's unique values. The Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS presents a set of revised indicators and standards to quantitatively monitor and maintain environmental and social conditions in the Merced River corridor. Monitoring results provide park managers with the information they needed to make sound, science-based decisions about the impacts associated with human use of the park.

Below is a list of the indicators monitored in 2006. For a description of the zoning prescriptions and a map of where they are located in the river corridor, please consult the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan*.



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| <b>INDICATOR:</b> | <b>WATER QUALITY</b>  |
| <b>ZONES:</b>     | <b>1D Designated Overnight, 2A Open Space, 2C Day Use, 2D Attraction, 3A Camping, 3B Visitor Base and Lodging, 3C Park Operations and Administration, but it is more practical to establish standards by segment than by zone.</b>                              |
| <b>STANDARD:</b>  | Anti-degradation for each segment, for fecal coliform, nutrients (total nitrogen and total phosphorus), and petroleum hydrocarbons per sampling period.<br>Absolute minimum, all segments: State fecal coliform standard for recreational contact at all times. |

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| <b>INDICATOR:</b> | <b>RIVER BANK EROSION</b>   |
| <b>ZONES:</b>     | <b>2B Discovery, 2C Day Use</b>   |
| <b>STANDARD:</b>  | Baseline data collection was conducted in 2005. Initial monitoring this year will provide feedback to inform the establishment of appropriate standards of quality. |

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| <b>INDICATOR:</b> | <b>WILDLIFE EXPOSURE TO HUMAN FOOD</b>   |
| <b>ZONES:</b>     | <b>2C Day Use, 2D Attraction, 3A Camping, 3B Visitor Base and Lodging</b>                          |
| <b>STANDARD:</b>  | 95% or greater compliance with food storage regulations in selected campgrounds and parking areas. |

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| <b>INDICATOR:</b> | <b>DENSITY AND CONDITION OF INFORMAL (SOCIAL) TRAILS</b>                       |
| <b>ZONES:</b>     | <b>2B Discovery, 2C Day Use</b>  |
| <b>STANDARD:</b>  | No net increase in total length of social trails as compared to 2004 baseline. |

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| <b>INDICATOR:</b> | <b>NUMBER OF ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER PARTIES IN WILDERNESS</b>   |
| <b>ZONES:</b>     | <b>1A Un-trailed, 1B Trailed Travel</b>  |
| <b>STANDARDS:</b> | <b>Zone 1A</b> - No more than one encounter with another party per four hour period 80% of the time.<br><b>Zone 1B</b> - No more than one encounter with another party per hour 80% of the time. |

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| <b>INDICATOR:</b>                | <b>NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT ONE TIME (PAOT)</b>  |
| <b>ZONES:</b>                    | <b>1C Heavy Use Trail, 2A Open Space, 2A+ Undeveloped Open Space, 2B Discovery, 2C Day Use, 2D Attraction</b>   |
| <b>TRAIL STANDARD:</b>           | <b>Zone 1C</b> - Not more than 20 people on a 50-meter section of the trail at any one time, 80% of the time.   |
| <b>RIVER STANDARD:</b>           | <b>Zones 2A, 2A+, 2B, 2C, and 2D</b> – Additional research and data collection will be conducted this year that will be used to inform the establishment of appropriate standards of quality. |
| <b>ATTRACTION SITE STANDARD:</b> | Revised data collection efforts this year will be used to inform the establishment of appropriate standards of quality.   |

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| <b>INDICATOR:</b> | <b>PARKING CAPACITY AT SELECTED SITES</b>   |
| <b>ZONES:</b>     | <b>2A Open Space, 2B Discovery, 2C Day Use, 2D Attraction, 3A Camping, 3B Visitor Base &amp; Lodging, 3C Park Operations &amp; Administration</b>         |
| <b>STANDARD:</b>  | Data collection efforts this year will continue to inform the establishment of appropriate standards of quality for parking capacities at selected sites. |

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| <b>INDICATOR:</b> | <b>USABILITY OF ETHNOBOTANICAL RESOURCES</b>   |
| <b>ZONES:</b>     | <b>2B Discovery, 2C Day Use</b>  |
| <b>STANDARD:</b>  | Methodological improvements in this indicator have been made and consultation with practitioners in 2006 will inform the establishment of appropriate standards of quality for the usability of selected traditionally gathered plant species. |

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## Other indicators tested in 2006

This past season's research and development was conducted on potential indicators of quality including:

- Formal trail assessments.
  - Soundscapes (sound environments).
  - Archeological resource assessments.
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## For more information:

Consult the *User Capacity Program for the Merced Wild and Scenic River Corridor*.

Read the VERP fact sheet (available on the park's planning web site at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning)).

Attend one of the park's monthly Open Houses to learn more about VERP and speak with park staff about the latest monitoring activities. A schedule of open houses can be viewed at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning).

Review VERP Monitoring Field Guides and Annual Reports (available on the park's planning web site at: [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning)).

Volunteer to help with monitoring efforts by contacting the park's volunteers in parks (VIP) program at: (209) 379-1850 or the VERP Monitoring Program Coordinator at: (209) 372-0273.

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